

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Federal “No Child Left Behind” Act: *Meeting the Report Card Requirements*

FACT SHEET

April 2005



State and local school district report cards are critical tools for promoting accountability for schools, local school districts, and States by publicizing data about student performance and program effectiveness for parents, policy makers, and other stakeholders. Report cards help parents and the general public to see where schools and districts are succeeding and where there is still work to do.

A well-informed public is an important resource in the school and district improvement process.

In the same way that data enable educators to make better decisions about teaching and learning, data can also help parents and other community members work more effectively with educators and local school officials to promote school improvement. Additionally, the more parents and community members know about the academic achievement of their children and their schools, the more likely they are to be involved in their local schools and the public school system. Equipped with information on academic results and teacher quality, parents and community members can make better decisions and choices. For these reasons, all States and districts receiving Title I funds must prepare and disseminate annual report cards.

What are the NCLB requirements for State and district report cards?

All States and districts receiving Title I, Part A funds must prepare and distribute report cards. States have the responsibility for producing and distributing State report cards and may, as is the case in many States, prepare and produce district report cards on behalf of their districts. If a district has the responsibility for producing and disseminating a district report card, the State must ensure that the district's report card meets all the statutory requirements.

How has Maine been meeting this requirement?

Maine began publishing a State, district, and school Report Card in the form of School Profiles long before NCLB made this a requirement. Much of the NCLB required data is already contained in the existing School Profiles. However, the required teacher quality data and disaggregated student assessment results have not yet been added.

What is SchoolMatters.com?

SchoolMatters.com is a project of the Education Data Partnership, a collaboration created to help transform the way education information is used by educators, policymakers and parents. The Education Data Partnership is collaboration among the Council of Chief State School Officers, Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Services, Achieve, Inc., and the CELT Corporation. Established in August 2004, the Education Data Partnership is generously funded by the Broad Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

SchoolMatters.com is a free public service that provides access to the largest, easily searchable collection of education data ever assembled. It includes student achievement information, financial data, and demographic information for all public schools, school districts and State education systems throughout the country.

Can SchoolMatters.com be used to help meet NCLB State, district, and school report card requirements?

SchoolMatters.com contains all the data reporting required for NCLB except for the Teacher Quality data. In addition, it includes powerful analytical tools provided by Standard and Poor's that tell the stories behind the numbers, which can stimulate discussion among education stakeholders about the best ways to improve student performance. It is a tool that is intended to serve educators, parents, and policymakers as they seek to find ways to improve student learning.

When should States and districts disseminate report cards?

States and districts must issue report cards annually. While States and districts have the flexibility to determine the exact time during the year when they will issue report cards, the best practice would be to issue report cards as early as possible, so that schools have critical information for improving instruction and parents have critical information to make decisions regarding public school choice and supplemental educational services options.

Recognizing that all the necessary data may not be available prior to the beginning of the school year, States and districts can issue a two-part report card, with some data elements available earlier than others. For example, an initial report could include information on assessment data and schools and districts identified for improvement, while data on teacher quality might be provided as early as possible later in the school year.

How should States and districts disseminate report cards?

States are encouraged to disseminate State report cards in multiple ways. States can post their report cards on the State's website and make copies available in local schools, libraries, parent centers, community centers, or other public locations easily accessible to parents and others. Please note that because not all parents and members of the public have access to the internet, posting report cards on the internet alone is not a sufficient means for disseminating State and district report cards. If a school or district chooses to use the SchoolMatters.com website for its reporting on student achievement, it must also ensure that all schools served by the local educational agency, all parents of students attending those schools, and the community at large all have access to the information through public means, beyond posting on the internet, such as distribution to the media, and distribution through public agencies, public libraries, etc. Districts may use their regular method of communicating with parents to meet the dissemination requirement so long as it provides information to all parents.

What format must State and district report cards use?

States and districts may use whatever format they determine to be most effective in presenting information in a concise, understandable manner. To the extent practicable, information in report cards should be provided in a language and format that parents can understand.

A Guide to Effective Accountability Reporting (CCSSO, December 2000, page 31) points out that an effective accountability report is: easy to read; accessible to the target audiences both physically and linguistically; accompanied by adequate interpretive information; supported by evidence that the indicators, other information, and suggested interpretations are valid; and coordinated across paper and electronic versions of report cards.

What are State and district responsibilities for ensuring that the information on report cards is statistically reliable and does not reveal personally identifiable information about individual students?

When presenting disaggregated data on report cards, States and districts must ensure that the data presented are statistically reliable. As part of each State's approved accountability plan under Title I, each State has identified a minimum number of students for reporting purposes. For example, if a State has identified 10 as its minimum group size ("n size") to ensure statistical reliability for reporting purposes, a State and its districts and schools will not report data for any subgroup for which there are fewer than 10 students.

In addition to ensuring that the data presented in report cards are statistically reliable, States, districts, and schools must also ensure that the data they report do not reveal personally identifiable information about individual students. Many States, for example, do not report data for any subgroup in which there are fewer than 10 students. Further, States must adopt a strategy for dealing with a situation in which all students in a particular subgroup scored at the same achievement level. One solution, referred to as "masking" the data, is to use the notation of >95% when all students in a subgroup score at the same achievement level. Moreover, schools, districts, and the Maine DOE must have in place quality control measures to review data for accuracy before submission. Once data are submitted and reported to the other agencies, interested organizations have access to the data and can use it for other reports. This is especially important because unless the errors are caught before submission, it is possible for data that are not accurate to be included in other documents and not be retrievable or correctable.

STATE EDUCATION AGENCY REPORT CARDS

What are the required data elements for State report cards?

State report cards must include information related to assessments, accountability, and teacher quality, and must include data from all districts in the State. A description of each of the data elements (assessments, accountability, teacher quality) for State report cards follows.

State Report Card Assessment Data

The following three components of assessment data must include all students in the grades tested in the State, not just those students enrolled for a full academic year, as defined by the State. At a minimum, Maine DOE must provide assessment data from the MEA reading and mathematics assessments. Beginning with assessment data from the 2007-2008 school year Maine DOE must also provide data from the MEA science assessments.

For each grade and subject tested, the State report card must include information on the percentage of enrolled students tested. This information must be disaggregated by the following subgroups: all students, major racial & ethnic groups, students with disabilities, limited English proficient, economically disadvantaged, migrant, and gender.

For each grade and subject tested, the State report card must include information on student achievement at each level disaggregated by the following subgroups: all students, major racial & ethnic groups, students with disabilities, limited English proficient, economically disadvantaged, migrant, and gender.

For each grade and subject tested, the State report card must include information on the most recent two year trend data in student achievement for each subject and for each grade.

State Report Card Accountability Data

The three components of accountability data required on our State's report card are (1) a comparison between student achievement levels and Maine's annual measurable objectives in reading and mathematics, (2) data on student performance on Maine's additional academic indicators used in making adequate yearly progress (AYP) determinations, and (3) information on districts and schools making AYP.

This must include a comparison between the actual achievement levels and Maine's annual measurable objectives in reading and mathematics for the following subgroups: all students, major racial & ethnic groups, students with disabilities, limited English proficient, and economically disadvantaged.

In presenting this comparison, Maine should report student assessment scores used by the State to determine Maine's AYP. Maine should indicate on the report card that the accountability data reported represents the assessment results of only those students enrolled in the State for a full academic year.

Information on the other academic indicators used by Maine for AYP determinations, including the graduation rate for high schools and average daily attendance (ADA) for elementary and middle schools must be disaggregated for the following subgroups: all students, major racial & ethnic groups, students with disabilities, limited English proficient, and economically disadvantaged.

The information on schools' AYP status must include the number and names of each district and school identified for improvement, corrective action, and restructuring, for districts and schools receiving Title I, Part A funds.

State Report Card Teacher Quality Data

For public elementary and secondary school teachers, Maine must provide information for the following three components:

1. The professional qualifications of all public elementary and secondary school teachers in the State, as defined by the State (e.g., bachelors and advanced degrees, licensure);
2. The percentage of all public elementary and secondary school teachers teaching with emergency or provisional credentials; and

3. The percentage of core academic classes in the State taught by highly qualified teachers in the aggregate and disaggregated by high-poverty compared to low-poverty schools which means schools in the top quartile of poverty and the bottom quartile of poverty in the State.

The requirement that teachers be highly qualified applies to public elementary and secondary school teachers who teach a core academic subject. School Results.com does not at this time collect Teacher Quality data, nor does the Department do it directly. The district must collect this information at the school and district levels and enter it into MEDMS for the State to be able to access it.

DISTRICT REPORT CARDS

What information must districts include on their district report cards?

Similar to State report cards, district report cards must include information related to assessments, accountability, and teacher quality as that information applies to the district as a whole and as it applies to each school served by the district. Individual school report cards are not required, but information about each school must be included in the district report card. A description of each of these data elements for district report cards follows.

District Report Card Assessment Information

The following four components of assessment data must include all students enrolled in the grades tested in the district as a whole and all students enrolled in the grades tested in each school served by the district, not just those students enrolled for a full academic year. The district must provide assessment data from its State's reading and mathematics assessments. Beginning with assessment data from the 2007-2008 school year, the district must also provide data from the MEA science assessments.

For each grade and subject tested, the district report card must include the following information for the district as a whole and for each school served by the district, including non Title-I schools:

1. Information on the percentage of enrolled students tested. This information must be disaggregated by the following subgroups: all students, major racial & ethnic groups, students with disabilities, limited English proficient, economically disadvantaged, migrant, and gender.
2. Information on student achievement at each level disaggregated by the following subgroups: all students, major racial & ethnic groups, students with disabilities, limited English proficient, economically disadvantaged, migrant, and gender.

- 3 Information that shows how students in the district achieved on State academic assessments as compared to students in the State as a whole; and for each school in the district information that shows how students in the school achieved on State assessments as compared to students in the district as a whole and as compared to students in the State as a whole.
4. The most recent two year trend data in student achievement for each subject and for each grade.

District Report Card Accountability Data

The three components of accountability data required on district report cards are (1) a comparison between student achievement levels and the State's annual measurable objectives in reading and mathematics, (2) data on student performance on the State's additional academic indicators used in making AYP determinations, and (3) information on districts and schools making AYP.

1. There must be a comparison between the actual achievement levels of students in the district as a whole and for each school within the district and the State's annual measurable objectives in reading and mathematics for the following subgroups: all students, major racial & ethnic groups, students with disabilities, limited English proficient, and economically disadvantaged.

In presenting this comparison, districts should report student assessment scores used by the district to make AYP determinations at the district level. Schools should report student assessment scores used to make AYP determinations at the school level.

2. There must be information on the other academic indicators used for AYP determinations, including the graduation rate for high schools and the average daily attendance (ADA) for elementary and middle school. This information must be disaggregated for the following subgroups: all students, major racial & ethnic groups, students with disabilities, limited English proficient, and economically disadvantaged.

Additional accountability information that must be included on the district report card includes:

- The total number of Title I-A schools identified for school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring and the percentage of the schools in the district they represent.

- The name of each Title I-A school identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring and how long each school has been identified.

District Report Card Teacher Quality Data

For every public elementary and secondary school teacher in a district, the district must provide, for the district as a whole and for each school within the district, information for the following three components:

1. The professional qualifications of all public elementary and secondary school teachers, as defined by the State (e.g., bachelors and advanced degrees, licensure);
2. The percentage of all public elementary and public school teachers teaching with emergency or provisional credentials; and
3. The percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers in the aggregate and disaggregated by high-poverty compared to low-poverty schools which (for this purpose) means schools in the top quartile of poverty and the bottom quartile of poverty in the State.

The requirement that teachers be highly qualified applies to public elementary and secondary school teachers who teach a core academic subject. For purposes of reporting information on the percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers, districts must report on elementary and secondary classes only in the core academic subjects.

May districts include additional information in their report cards?

Yes. A district may include any other information it determines is appropriate whether or not that information is included in the State report card.